



NCRPC NEWS

A publication of the North Central Regional Planning Commission

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www.ncrpc.org

Organization Sees Staffing Changes

Three long-time staff members with a combined total of 62 years of service to the organization are leaving the NCRPC this summer to pursue new phases of life.

Two from the NCRPC housing department staff are retiring this summer. Jeff Maska began with the organization in 1991 and Jeff



Jeff Maska



Jeff Gansel



Deb Ohlde

Gansel began in 2001 — both as Housing Inspectors. The majority of their work included inspections for Housing Quality Standards (HQS), weatherization, asbestos, and risk assessments for lead-based paint. Maska lives in Hays and Gansel lives in Salina. Both have logged many miles traveling to perform contracted inspections for several different agencies. Jeff Maska began a phased retirement in spring 2014 and has worked part-time since then providing inspections primarily in the western part of the state. He retired at the end of June. Jeff Gansel will retire at the end of July.

Deb Ohlde joined the NCRPC in 1994 as a community development specialist/project administrator. She also served as assistant executive director from April 2008 through 2015. After stepping down as assistant director, Ohlde remained with the organization in a special

projects role for the first half of 2016. Her last day with the NCRPC was June 6, which marked exactly 22 years to the day from when she began. Ohlde now owns NEW Heartland

“The miles they have driven to directly interact and assist customers and the lives they have positively impacted are immeasurable.”

— Doug McKinney
NCRPC Executive Director

Freelance, a consulting company she started in 2015, and works with Country Banker Systems LLC, an affiliate of the bank holding company of which she and her husband, Tim, own partial interest.

Doug McKinney, Executive Director, says he appreciates the tremendous contributions the three have made to the NCRPC, the region and beyond.

“The miles they have driven to directly interact and assist customers and the lives they have positively impacted are immeasurable,” McKinney says. ■

EXECUTIVE BOARD

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ABOUT US

Our Mission

Advancing rural Kansas through comprehensive planning and development services.

Our Vision

By 2024, communities in rural Kansas will favor choices that embrace innovation, increase prosperity and demonstrate resilience.

Contact Us

109 N. Mill, PO Box 565
Beloit, KS 67420
785-738-2218
Email: ncrpc@nckcn.com

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Collaboration Might Help Local, Regional Food Systems

At the time of writing this column, it is wheat harvest in Kansas. Yields are nearing 80 bushels per acre in places. Hungry? Fortunately, most of us have the blessing of good food quite often. The general food system is made up of the way the basic food stuffs are grown, the way the food is yielded or butchered, and the way the raw product is processed, then boxed or bagged up, and made ready for purchase, plus the distribution means to get it to the customer in a timely manner. It seems complicated.

The local or regional food system, which has been assisted by North Central Regional Planning Commission for a little while, refers to the geographical proximity of the production and provision nearer to the end use rather than on a national scale. Simply put, local or regional sourced food is grown and harvested close to consumers and distributed over much shorter distances than is common in the conventional global industrial food system. There does not seem to be a solid consensus on what is local. It is 100 miles or 400 miles in distance by some definers. Less than a day's journey from the field or pasture to the user might be how others define it.



Doug McKinney has been NCRPC Executive Director since 2008.

Food safety and reduced handling might be another rationale. It has challenges as well such as regulatory inspections and issues related to the centralized processing and packaging that tend to be far from north central Kansas consumers. However, local food systems reduce some extras involved in processing, packaging, transporting, and selling food. Can it be efficient and effective? Collaboration might help.

The United States rural population has declined every decennial census since 1820. Along the same lines, the number of people residing on farms is decreasing. While it may not reverse the trend, local food development can

Why is there increased interest in local foods? After all, farmers markets in Kansas have doubled in number since 1995. The appeal, taste and quality of local foods is high. Support for local economy is another reason.

support local economies. I have read that between just 2 and 4 percent of the food we consume is derived from local sources. If we boost that to even 5 percent, think of the larger impact on our regional economy. Research at University of Minnesota found small farms with gross incomes of \$100,000 or less made as much as 90 percent of farm-related purchases in their local and regional realms. Of every dollar the farm spends, a high percentage remains in the local economy.

You might consider supporting Alma or Weibe Cheese, Prairieland Produce, Culver's Fish, Rev Honey, Louisburg Cider, Russell Stover Candies, Hudson Flour, Tony's Pizza, Mama Lupa's tortillas, Marcon Pies, or Kansas beef or Kansas pork, just to name a few. Kansas chicken is also used in Campbell Soup made nearby in Tecumseh, Nebraska. My interest in local and regional food involves reading product labels, talking with local grocers about their interests in local and regional products, and supporting producers be it at farmers markets or otherwise. Local foods promotion can be beneficial. I express gratitude for those who help grow, prepare and deliver something we all enjoy — good food. ■

NCK-WiFi Debuts at Special Events

Bike Across Kansas cyclists stopping at checkpoints at Mankato and Belleville in June had the unique opportunity to have their own wifi internet access to check in with family and friends and to send pictures of their adventure. A partnership of NCKCN, a NCRPC affiliate, and Cunningham Telephone & Cable made this possible by setting up its new NCK WiFi equipment at the checkpoint locations in

Cunningham's service area. NCK WiFi was also set up for the Belleville Car Show. Guests were able to take pictures of their favorite cars and send to their friends via the wifi internet access.

Both events were a huge success and a great test of the new capabilities of the NCK-WiFi service. Stay tuned for more information about NCK-WiFi hotspots becoming available in the Cunningham service area. ■

Housing and HVAC Contractors Needed

The NCRPC is currently seeking qualified housing and/or HVAC contractors to bid contract work for our Housing Rehabilitation and Household Weatherization Assistance Programs.

Benefits to contractors include a steady flow of work, clear and accurate work specifications, and timely payments as work is successfully completed. To learn more, visit www.ncrpc.org/services/housing/contractor-opportunities/. ■

NCRPC Board Welcomes Blanchard

Jon Blanchard, Salina City Commissioner, recently joined the NCRPC Executive Board of Directors. He previously served on the board from 2013-2014. In addition to serving on the Salina City Commission, Jon is also actively involved with the Salina Heritage Commission and North Salina Community Development, Inc.

Jon is a land planner/landscape architect and owner of i3 Design Studio, which is based in Salina. His primary business services include land



Jon Blanchard

planning, golf course design, landscape architecture, and consulting services for various mixed-use, golf course, industrial, commercial and residential

development. Jon has a Bachelor of Landscape Architecture from Kansas State University. ■

Housing Accessibility Funding Remains

Funding for residential handicapped accessibility modifications remains available for a limited time in Mitchell, Dickinson, Ottawa and Saline Counties. A \$300,000 Multi-County Housing Accessibility project was awarded in summer 2015 as part of a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) special round of funding. Mitchell County is the lead county and the NCRPC is administering the project.

The four counties are working together to provide needed

accessibility improvements for homeowners. The improvements that are eligible include items such as bathroom modifications, ramps, utility rooms, driveways, sidewalks, doorways and other accessibility improvements. Assistance is available on a first come first served basis.

For more information about the project or to apply for assistance, visit the website at www.ncrpc.org/services/housing/ or contact Carol Torkelson, NCRPC Housing Director, at 785-738-2218. ■

NEWS BRIEFS

Draemel Joins NCRPC Staff

Michael Draemel has joined the NCRPC staff as Internet Application Technology Coordinator. In his role with NCRPC affiliate NCKCN, Draemel will primarily be involved in the creation and maintenance of Internet Application Technologies including online web portals, web sites, and mobile WiFi hotspots for NCKCN clientele.



Michael Draemel

Michael is from Beloit and graduated in May from Fort Hays State University with a degree in Information Networking and Telecommunications (INT). He also has a degree in Business Administration. ■

Board Recognizes Hardy



Executive Board Vice Chair, Tom Claussen, (left) presents a certificate of appreciation to Randall Hardy (right).

Outgoing NCRPC Executive Board member Randall Hardy, who served as a representative from the City of Salina for the past two years, was recognized at the May 26 board meeting for his service to the organization and to the region. ■

UPCOMING EVENTS AND DEADLINES

Thursday, July 28, 2016

NCRPC Executive Board Meeting
Miltonvale Emergency Services Building,
2 p.m.

Thursday, August 25, 2016

NCRPC Executive Board Meeting
Ottawa County Courthouse, 2 p.m.

FY 2017 CDBG Funding Deadlines

Housing - Aug. 31, 2016
Water and Sewer - Sept. 30, 2016
Community Facilities - Nov. 1, 2016
Special Activity - Nov. 1, 2016
KAN STEP - Aug. 15, 2016 &
Feb. 15, 2017

CDBG Deadlines Continued

Economic Development - Open
Window from Jan 1-Dec. 10, 2016
For more information, visit
www.kansascommerce.com/cdbg or
contact the NCRPC.

Save the Date!

Thursday, November 3, 2016

NCRPC Banquet, Abilene
Eisenhower Presidential Library
5:15 p.m. Social
6 p.m. Dinner & Keynote Speaker
More details and registration
information to follow.



North Central
Regional Planning Commission

109 N. Mill ■ PO Box 565
Beloit, KS 67420 ■ www.ncrpc.org

Rawhide Portable Corral, Inc. Continues to Grow, Expand

What began as John McDonald's invention of a hydraulic, portable corral in 2002 has blossomed into a thriving business with 40 employees.

John and his wife, Mary, own and operate Rawhide Portable Corral, Inc. in Abilene. The business offers three sizes of its portable corral known as the Rawhide Processor, which is designed to make work on a farm and ranch simpler and more efficient.

The McDonald's children are also involved in the family business. Daughter Cassy Wilson came back to Abilene in 2014 as Marketing Director. As the company has grown, her role has evolved to include Human Resources and Accounting as well. Son Ethan McDonald works with the business remotely and assists with farm shows and sales.

In 2013 the business expanded and moved to a larger building located at 900 N. Washington in Abilene that nearly doubled its existing manufacturing space. Another expansion took place in 2015 with the completion of an addition to the facility.

The company's products are being used in at least 38 states and Brazil and Australia.

The 2013 expansion project was made possible with funding from Pinnacle Bank, NCRPC Revolving Loan Fund, NCK Rural Business Development Initiative Loan Program, NCK Business Development Loan Fund, StartUp



Courtesy Photo

The Rawhide Processor is a portable corral designed to help livestock production businesses operate more efficiently.

Kansas Loan Program and investment by the owners. For more information about the financing programs used, contact Debra Peters, NCRPC Business Finance Director, at 785-738-2218. For more information about the business, visit www.rawhideportablecorral.com. ■